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Agenda item 73 (m)
General and complete disarmament

Missiles

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum*

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* This reply was received after the submission of the main report.

03-53029 (E) 250903

II. Replies received from Member States

Islamic Republic of Iran

[Original: English]
[12 August 2003]

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the issue of missiles in all its aspects (A/57/229) as the first multilateral and systematic step in dealing with this issue. We firmly believe that this international endeavour would strengthen the central role of the United Nations and its related bodies in the field of arms regulation and disarmament, which in turn would increase the security and stability of all Member States at the regional and global levels.

2. Given the complexities involved in considering the issue of missiles in all its aspects, including missiles as one of the means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction, their application and role in the conventional context and peaceful uses, and above all their role in launching civil satellites and space vehicles, the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the following points:

(a) As the report reiterated, "there exists at present no universally accepted norms or instruments to deal specifically with missile-related concerns in all their aspects". Therefore, in our view the United Nations should continue to have a primary and central role in dealing with the issue of missiles, taking into account all the views and concerns of Member States, including their regional and global concerns and their legitimate defensive needs, in a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory manner. Furthermore, the support of Member States for the resolution on missiles which has been adopted by the General Assembly in the past four consecutive years indicates a continuing need for such a resolution;

(b) Nothing should be done by any Member State or group of States to undermine the central role of the United Nations in this field and the efforts carried out since 1999 within the framework of the United Nations on the basis of the resolution on missiles;

(c) Any parallel initiative that would overshadow the possible outcome of the next panel of governmental experts, to be held in 2004 according to operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 57/71, on missiles should be avoided.

3. The second panel of governmental experts should concentrate in a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory manner on the following issues related to missiles:

(a) To seek complementary measures to explore ways and means to secure the international community against the threats posed by some types of missiles;

(b) To discuss and prepare specific recommendations with a view to dispelling the concerns of all States on the issue of missiles in all their aspects;

(c) To examine a specific mechanism to promote the peaceful uses of missiles, inter alia, in launching civil satellites and space vehicles.

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A/58/117/Add.2

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* This reply was received after the submission of the main report.

03-54567 (E) 101003

II. Replies received from Member States

Italy*

[Original: English]
[29 September 2003]

1. The European Union (EU) member States abstained in the vote on General Assembly resolution 57/71. The rationale for such a decision is not linked to the content of the resolution itself — much of which we agree with — but rather to what has not been included in the resolution. In effect, the resolution does not give due attention to the proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially those capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. As a matter of fact, we believe that the proliferation of ballistic missiles is an urgent problem which deserves the highest attention.

2. The EU stresses that programmes of acquisition and development of ballistic missiles have adverse consequences on global peace and security. The EU notes with concern that the international community as a whole is challenged by the growing risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction's means of delivery, such as ballistic missiles.

3. The EU cannot and does not ignore these threats: meeting this challenge is a priority in EU external action. The EU reaffirms its commitment to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls, as well as to addressing the problems of regional instability and insecurity, and the situations of conflict which may lie behind many ballistic missiles programmes. At the same time, the EU stresses that, in addition, a global, multilateral approach to the problem is necessary.

4. The EU considers that the establishment of globally accepted rules and practices to support ballistic missiles non-proliferation is essential and urgent. Therefore, since the Goteborg European Council in 2001, the EU has strongly supported and participated in the efforts aimed at developing and launching an international code of conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles, the Hague Code of Conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles (HCOC). Consequently, the EU attaches great importance to its universalization and is actively engaged to have it adopted by as many States as possible. As a matter of fact, since the launching conference of HCOC held in The Hague less than one year ago, the number of countries adhering to HCOC has considerably grown: today more than 100 countries adhere to it.

5. The EU recalls that HCOC establishes, on the one hand, fundamental principles that were previously lacking and introduces, on the other hand, a multilateral framework for cooperation in an area where previously there was none. While the EU recognizes that other initiatives have been proposed in the field, it stresses that HCOC is the most advanced one. The EU considers HCOC an initial but essential step to effectively address the problem from a multilateral, global perspective, without precluding other initiatives or, in the longer run, more comprehensive approaches.

6. The EU considers that in its first year of life, HCOC has already become an asset: at present, HCOC membership covers all continents, thus helping spread

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union.

confidence and enhance international security. However, the EU regrets that there are still membership gaps in certain regions where ballistic missiles proliferation is still an urgent issue. Thus, the EU welcomes all newly adhering countries and strongly hopes more countries will adhere to HCOC in the near future so as to move forward towards its universalization as a politically binding instrument. In that respect, the EU believes that the relationship between HCOC and the United Nations should be strengthened.

7. Finally, the EU welcomes the establishment of an expert group, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/33, as a useful mechanism in the multilateral consideration of the issue of missiles. The EU, however, is not convinced that another panel of governmental experts, as proposed by the resolution, is an efficient next step. Any future panel would only be meaningful on the basis of an agreed specific mandate which ensured that added value could be offered.